4/18/72

Mr. W.F.Childress, Editor
Knoxville Journal
Knoxville, Tenn.

Dear Mr. Childress,

A hasty note I've been trying to find time for for four days. I ask that you regard it as confidential.

Before getting into that, a comment: I presume you have seen and been influence by the smoothest and I think most persuasive product of eastern intellectual whoredom, Gerold Frank's book. If this seems like an exaggerated condemnation, you figure out your own challenges for me to confront on it or try and get him to confront me with you to moderate, on questions related to the fact of the assassination, not the whores Ray may have laid, with two-minute limit to answers. (There hasn't been a fillibusterer like him since Huey Long.) Or, pick your own reporter to be middleman. Or, I'll show you how to prove enough is the most blatant falsehood. Or, if, as I plan, I can get there, I'll bring you the proof. Still another alternative, if you have the interest, I can show you how, with traditional journalistic practises, you can now come up with some stories I would regard as significant.

I am about to leave on a trip made possible by Frank's agreement to confront me on TV, with the deck stacked in his favor. I expect him to change his mind, despite his advantages. If that causes the station to cancel, I will be financially unable to make that trip. I have no book to sell and as of today, my publisher has not only not arranged a single promotion for it but hasn't even refunded the slight costs of my last trip to a TV station on it.

On this trip, it is my plan to stop off at Petros on the way back. Prior to getting there I hope to be able to interview at least two prisoners elsewhere. Both have written to allege that everyone James Ray ever knew is being put away, quietly, by the FBI. One such letter, from a total stranger, claims he is one. I will have this correspondence with me plus whatever I will have received by the time of my departure in two weeks. Obviously, I now have no way of evaluating these claims.

James is in the hole again. I have suggested he take the nickname "mole". About as soon as the warden outs him there he writes me. Again, I have no immediate way of evaluating his claim, but it is that "The day I got off lock-up they moved me four times within 3 hours. Then, when I refused to move the last time I was accused of refusing to obey an order. I believe for several reasons the heat is again getting on the case." He also says that his brother Jerry, while presumably looking for witnesses in the case of their brother John, was slugged hard enough to require several days of hospitalization. There have been other developments, records of which I will have with me.

I expect to be pressed for time. I'd like to be able to avoid staying over in Knoxville. I'll be coming from St. Louis or Kansas City. If you want to talk to me, I will arrange to stay over. Otherwise, if you want a reporter backgrounded, I can do this on the trip to and from Petros and while I am with James he can read what I will have that I may properly show him, the one reservation being preservation of condience unless and until a story breaks, if one does. If you have the interest, I think I can put you on to some good stories.

Best regards, Harold Weisberg